

FOUGHT IT OUT ON BANK STREET.

THE CITY AND THE ELECTRIC COM-
PANY MEASURE STRENGTH.

As to Who Should Control the Streets
and Keep the Snow Levelled—A Wild
Scene of Tumult—Thousands of People
Watch the Combat.

The city and the Electric Railway company wrestled for supremacy for nearly an hour and a half on Bank street yesterday afternoon and thousands of citizens watched the combat with the most lively demonstrations of interest and excitement.

The trouble was with regard to the removal of the snow which lay in banks between the curb and the electric tracks blocking all intercourse between the street line and the different business houses. The clause in the company's agreement with the corporation is that they (the company) shall keep the streets on which their tracks are placed clear of snow from curb to curb. They did not do so; hence the fight.

LEVELLING THE SNOW BANKS.

Yesterday afternoon City Engineer Surtees, in consequence of requests to have the obstructions removed, gave Foreman Birkett directions to take a gang of snow shovellers to Bank street and level down the immense masses that had been thrown back on the sidewalk line from the electric tracks by the company's plows, and forming an impassable barrier.

The shovellers went to work and began cutting down the ridge. The foreman gave them strict orders to throw no snow on the track, and this order was carefully obeyed. So careful was the foreman on this point he repeatedly kicked off stray pieces of snow that accidentally rolled on to the tracks, and stooped and picked up lumps and threw them away. The track was perfectly clear.

COMBAT IN THE SNOW.

The work had scarcely been well started when one of the company's big snowplows was suddenly seen coming up the street, and almost in less time than the story can be told the astonished corporation men were forced aside, their work undone and the snow ridge or barrier replaced as if by magic. This proceeding was at once responded to by the shovellers,

who again scattered the ridge. This time there was no attempt to prevent the snow falling on the track. Up came the snow plow again, followed by the electric sweeper and heigh, presto, there was the barrier once more. The crowd began to take a hand. Staid citizens, men of responsibility in the vicinity got shovels and began helping the corporation laborers.

Very soon Bank street from Albert to Nepean was blocked by a wildly swaying mass of humanity. Ordinary traffic in the thoroughfare ceased and all business was at a standstill. Vehicles crowded in the cross streets while the people massed in dense columns on the sidewalks and out to the street line.

CHARGE AND COUNTER CHARGE.

In the beginning, the corporation laborers were gathered on the block between Slater and Maria and handled their shovels like experts. When they labored nothing could be seen but an immense cloud of snow as they tossed it from the snow banks to the tracks. This was followed in rapid order by the company's plow charging down and throwing back the snow and then the sweeper came tearing along under a full head of electricity and swept the snow that the plow had left clean from the tracks.

THE EXCITEMENT GROWS.

In ten minutes the snow on that block between shovels, plow and sweeper was ground up into the finest possible material.

Then Corporation Foreman Birkett sent some of his men further south along Bank to ply their shovels, which they did with right good will. Passengers on the electric cars caught the excitement and stood up in the seats peering out of the windows at the tumult, for despite the utmost efforts of the shovellers the plow and sweeper kept the tracks comparatively clear.

Mr. Guy's snowplow was then ordered out by the city authorities and this reinforcement to the shovellers soon began to tell on the blocked-up tracks. But the company were determined to be supreme, for no sooner did Mr. Guy's plow get to work than out came another company plow and another sweeper, and the city lost its vantage.

A SCENE OF TUMULT.

The scene almost baffled description when all the apparatus was at work, the shovellers bending all their energies to the work of filling in the tracks, and the company fighting them back with snowplows and electricity. When a car would stick in the snow banks on the tracks the crowd would cheer and yell at the top of its voice, for popular opinion ran strong against the ridge builders. Even the boys who stood close to the rails despite the great risk of being run over by the galloping snowplow, or equally fast running sweeper, kicked and shoved the snow back on the rails.

VOICES FROM THE CROWD.

Some men grew deeply excited. "Do the railway company think they run the town," exclaimed a man with blazing eyes; "if they do it is time to run them out of it," and grasping an idle shovel that stood in a snow bank he threw the snow in great style on to the tracks.

"Every man in the city should turn out with a shovel," exclaimed another equally excited individual, "and block the track from the C. P. R. to New Edinburgh. These fellows want to be taught a lesson."

"They're a—monopoly," was what a man with a very Irish face shouted as the sweeper passed. "And they should be put off the streets altogether."

"They think they have elected enough of their men to the city council to make them independent of everybody, but if the council dare give them another privilege, away with the council," was the exclamation of another indignant citizen.

Comments of like nature ran along the crowd from end to end for each seemed to look upon the action of the company as a personal insult.

Mr. W. Y. Soper was everywhere directing his employees, at one time on foot at another riding in front of a sweeper.

"The citizens can now understand the value of the services rendered by last year's railway committee," was the remark of ex-Ald. Hill, "and the people can see what a class of men they had to deal with."

It was fully half-past four o'clock when City Engineer Surtees arrived on the scene. The tumult was then at its height. People watched with curiosity to see what action he would take. He took the matter coolly and told the men to continue their labors.

Some people imagined that the engineer would have got the police to stop the cars from running until the matter was settled, but he took no action further than to direct the men to level down the snowbanks.

Chief of Police McVeity and other members of the force were on the ground to prevent breaches of the peace, but their services were not required the crowd as a general thing being good naturedly disposed towards each other.

Shortly before five o'clock the word was passed to the shovellers to cease from their labors and the immense crowd then melted away. And so ended a scene such as the capital never witnessed before.

Although there were some narrow escapes from fast running horses and rapidly revolving plows no accident occurred.

MR. SURTEES' EXPLANATION.

Mr. Surtees spoken to about the matter this morning said "The trouble between the city and the corporation with regard to the snow clearing will remain in abeyance for a day or two, but if the agreement of the company is not carried out to the very letter, means and measures will be adopted to compel them to do so. The streets must be kept free of snow."

Last night the company's plows were at work on Bank st. and this morning a sleigh was set to work carting the snow away. A sleigh was also at work on Rideau st.